

Remarks

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the application in view of the following remarks.

Election/Restrictions

According to the Office action, claims 1-20 stand subject to restriction to one of groups I and II.

Applicant hereby elects Group I, claims 1-12 and 20, with traverse.

Election of Species

The Office Action further requires election of species among claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-15 and 20.

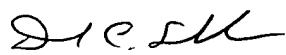
This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention: various thickeners as described in Claims 4, 5, 8, and 10-12.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-15 and 20 are generic.

Within this group, Applicants elect, for prosecution on the merits, the species relating to polyacrylate thickeners, e.g., sodium polyacrylate thickeners as specifically recited in claims 4, 5, 8, and 10-12.

It is respectfully submitted that this communication is fully responsive to the outstanding Restriction Requirement. Early favorable consideration on the merits is therefore earnestly solicited. In the event that a phone conference between the Examiner and the Applicant's undersigned attorney would help resolve any issues in the application, the Examiner is invited to contact said attorney at (651) 275-9806.

Respectfully Submitted,

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